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LEFT BANK BOOKS NEWSLETTER #1

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LEFT BANK BOOKS /



PLAY

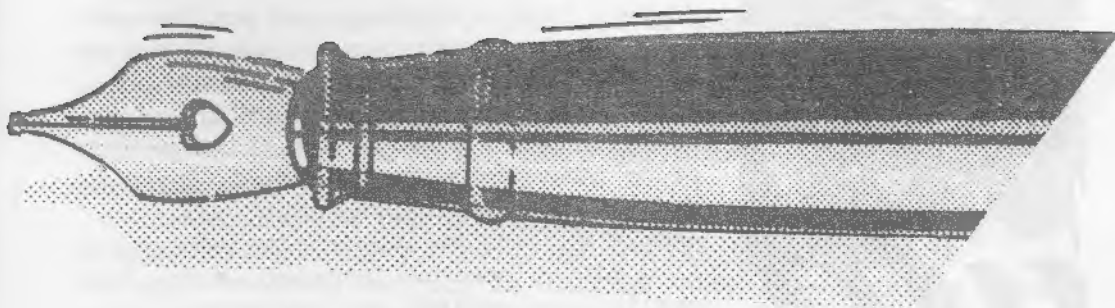


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FORPLAY is an occaissional newsltter/journal published by *Left Bank Books*, 92 Pike st., Seattle, Wa. 98101. The views & articles herein do not reflect the views of anyone other than the author(s) of the articles. Only those articles signed *Left Bank Books Collective* are to be construed as the views of the collective. Letters & articles are encouraged.

Initals of those who worked on this issue-
SL,DM,DB,██,DM,JM,AT,DH



WHY A NEWSLETTER?

People dash in, people dash out. Business as usual. There is no sustained dialogue or sharing of information--yet it could be that many of the things we are interested in or are involved with are worth sharing. We also have a lot of information about books, activities, ideas, & worthy causes which can be passed along. A newsletter provides a handy vehicle for this.

As well, we should kick up a little dust now & then. Nothing is quite so disgusting as the stultifying shibboleths which the "left" sports like an armor. These should be challenged with ourselves and with others.

Doc Watson notes in a song that *"The sun comes up, the sun goes down...life gets ted-*

ius, don't it?". The trick--if trick be the word--is to get well beyond all that.

Life, in a society best characterized by its destructiveness, its boredom, its authority & its commodity, clearly lies elsewhere.

A newsletter may be a poor form of challenge, but we must hammer out our ideas if we are to go beyond mere gesture in the rejection of everyday life.

Freedom of the press does not belong to those who own one, but to those who *use* one. Like *Samizdat*, another small fish, another small link in a larger realm which makes up the vital movement for a freedom & equality that is not illusory.



is punk

'here'I have spent'time and put to-
gether this documentation'and pata-
documentation'and subjective consi-
deration'as part of this punk'thing'
so-called'this work is the first part
of an attempt to communicate'to be
for alliance/solidarity among all
people who are so'inquisitive'so'
like minded'some so ignorant' and
easily mis-led/led' and not invol-
ved'though some may yet join our
attempt to revolt against boredom'
and its a special hello to all who
are so'similar'

'from too many Ideological citadels'too many people have
attacked'ignored'so-called punk'post-punk/post/modern'one of
the vital movements of humans towards/for'some utopia'a little
anarchy in every-day life'maybe freedom'against'away from'Ci-
vilization as Patriarchy'as Capitalizum'as Authority' as Mod-
ernity'as God/dess'as Normality'

'so-called punk summer of 1976'anti-Consumerizum'anti-Trad-
itional Roles'what began as'Sex Pistols as Conceptual Punk'
was/is soon surpassed by punks as they were'are'in the streets'
as action'as urban folk culture'as culture of the critical mo-
ment'is action'

'all too easily most of the Left in the USA has swallowed
the Medias' billing'of "Punk"'as racist'self-destructive'anti-
creative'some how evil' in the US the racists'egomaniacs'zom-
bies'thugs'that have associated them-selves with some of the'
symbols'trappings'and some of our music'are not insurrection-
aries'theve just left Ted Nugent and Molly Hatchet concerts'
for some new thrills'a new commodity'as seen on TV'in the pa-
pers'these zombies have seen the Medias lies and distortions'
adapting(not creating)not what is going on among us but the
past'the stagnant Fashion of "Sex Pistols Rool"' and swas-
tikas for commercial use'in England it is a non-punk'pre-punk'
SkinheadsMovement that are racists'the punks were side by side

with rastas and asians in Liverpool and London bashing bobbies'
 'as a part of the stance against Normality among us Wymyn
 have stood-out'seized the time and action'and have established
 them-selves immediately (regardless of and kicking in the balls
 wining Macho-men who didnt agree) as vital activists'musicians'
 in our music'so-called'rock-n-roll like theyve never been in
 rock-n-roll'and performance culture'not only are more groups
 thoroughly gender mixed'but there are more and more all womyn
 bands as well'

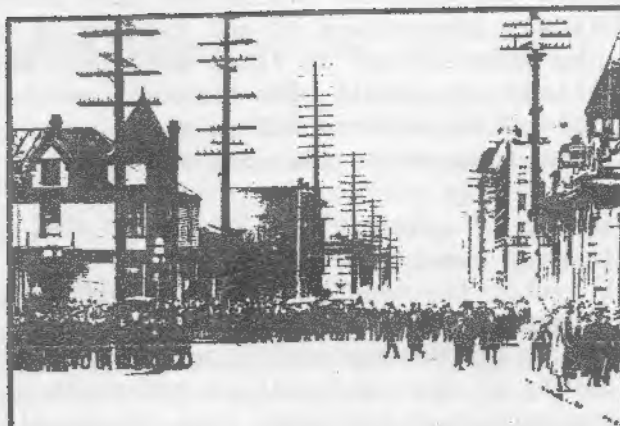
'concerning the use of swastikas'on clothing'on badges'
 originally the mixingof swastika'crucifix'Queen'
 mixing societal symbols'is used to subvert/degrade the myths/
 mystiques of'the swastika for instance'to the level of clown-
 ish/costume'to destroy traditions'conditioning old aesthetics'
 to re-fuse the society of the spectacle of modernist society
 against it-self'the boutiques and their punk bourgeoisie'punk-
 eosie'that now buy up the interesting used clothing and sell
 it for shit-profit'that design Fashion'are no more a part of
 our'contemporary radical culture'then politicians are a part of
 politics' "New Wave""Futurist New Romance"are no-thing' they
 are vacant commodities'non-resistive'crasso-commercializum'sold
 by Fashion Nazis for consumption by Fashion Victims'the idea
 behind the subversive use of clothing and paraphenalia is to
 create personal ID'a personal statement/attack on Normality'
 stripped naked by historical/hysterical realities we wear our
 weapons now as well'

'punks/post-punks/post-moderns'as'anarchists'even as many
 of us are striving for anarchy as every-day-life'there are
 probably as many zombies consuming circled-As and slogans as
 mind-less-ly as they drive their Karz'and live in Bellevue'
 this is true'but in the UK one performance/action group'CRASS'
 (Citizens Revolting Against a Sick Society)'has opened an ex-
 plicitly anarcha-punk center in London'in the UK the Rock
 Against Racism movement was born'blacks and whites bands and
 supporters used RAR in the 70s and now to rally all colors of
 rebel youth against racism'here in the USA and Canada growing
 Rock Against Ray-Gun feelings/gigs is organizing opposition-
 ist-rock'

'in a word'desperate'punks found them-selves in the midst
 of Barbarizum'and violent collapse'it made/makes us'desperate'
 post-punk/post-modern culture is found in the vortexs of Western
 decay and lives as our anger'our desperation'

-----Squid Ug'Ly

next; Is Seattle?



Revolution in Seattle

"A toast to the American union -- 47 states and
the Soviet of Washington."

Postmaster General Farley

Here were anarchist and socialist colonies, the
uproar of the Free Speech Fights, massacres
in Centralia and Everett, vigilante mobs,
beatings, deportations, and Red News Wagons
selling tons of radical papers -- "so red they
sizzled."

No one had seen a general strike before, but it
was coming -- "leading no one knows where."
The Seattle General Strike. Labor ruled a city.

Revolution in Seattle A memoir by Harvey O'Connor \$7.50

Available at bookstores or direct from:

Left Bank Books

92-Pike Street 622-0195 Seattle 98101

POOR "EXPRESSIONS OF CRITICAL TIMES"

While taking one of my usual walks through the U-District, I spotted a poster amongst the barrage of graffiti. The poster read *"An Expression of Critical Times"*. It was for a new radio show on KRAB-FM.

The poster showed a police car over-turned & burning. The caption read *"Police car burns in London. What next?"* I was excited--a radio show put together by some autonomous Seattle-ites! It had been a long while since I had heard any rebellion on the radio, especially a show dealing with riots in Europe (something that is spontaneous, unorganized & not your usual leftist crap).

I was anxious to hear what these folks had to say & what kind of music they would play. So I turned on my radio Friday afternoon to check it out.



The AM the PM the
FM too....

UGH! MORE OF THE SAME!

The show started with two songs by the Clash, one being the *"Guns of Brixton"*. Visions raced through my head: Barricades thrown up, reggae music blaring in the streets, people actually experiencing freedom, even if for a short time. The music switched to something less familiar (I'm not acquainted with "new" music) but still had a heavy sound & spouted outrageous lyrics.

I was curious about the people playing the music on this show...some rebellious youth, I imagined.

A woman came on the airwaves, going on about how womyn are oppressed & need to earn more money & deserve better jobs.

But the title of this show was *"expressions of Critical Times"*, not *"More Leftist Jive."* Seems to me rebellious youth wouldn't demand more jobs & higher pay, but an end to this monotonous, boring lifestyle which advanced technology has im-

posed upon us. Wasn't the point of the woman's movement (before E.R.A) an all out rebellion against hierarchy & domination in all forms?--not merely to become high paid factory workers like men? High paid button pushers are not liberated.

I called the woman at KRAB to get her views straight. I asked if she thought woman's oppression would end with more jobs & she replied that it was important that wages were equalized between the sexes. When I asked why she told me "so womyn could afford cars & stereos like others who have good jobs."

I hung up the phone.

Rebellious, expressions of critical times, what a fucking mess. The problem with society is work, jobs, wages & the reluctance to rebel against them. I thought these rebels would be against technological society & work instead of demanding more jobs & higher pay.

After some nice tunes the drivel continued. A man spoke about the recent spectacle labelled a "squat" on Capitol Hill. He said it had failed due to lack of support & put a guilt trip on people for not being active in this action.

Well, I had been down to this "squat". I lost interest right away, for a couple of reasons. The main reason I didn't find it too exciting was that the squatters (or so they called themselves) lacked any imagination. Their main interest was what kind of media coverage they were going to get. How can you expect people to get involved in an event that lacks any creative expression, and simply resorts to bullshit?

Even if this squat was boring it could have had some authenticity. But just as most leftist events are mere spectacles, this was no exception. What can we expect? This is the '80's, when liberals are considered radical.

The problem is that an "expression of Critical Times" is needed in this age dehumanization, not more jumble that does nothing but put people off and further diminishes the chance for creative change.

Clabbermouth Clyde



* DOWN WITH
HIERARCHY



* ANARCHIST

I'VE LABORED LONG AND HARD FOR BREAD,
FOR HONOR AND FOR RICHES,
BUT ON MY CORNS TOO LONG YOU'VE TRED
YOU FINE-HAIRED SONS OF BITCHES.

Black Bart in note left after his first stagecoach robbery in 1775.

Historical note: Black Bart robbed 28 stage coaches in northern California, always alone, on foot, and using an unloaded shotgun.

It's hard to say
when we began
breaking the law.



"How do you prevent any one getting too rich?" a British general enquired of an inhabitant of the Swat Valley [India], where a rudimentary form of Communism is carried out. "We cut his throat," was the brief reply.

From World Revolution by Nesta H Webster



The "True" Story of the



The A in the circle is now so well known & recognized that it is considered a traditional anarchist symbol giving the impression it has always existed. But the truth is it is a newcomer to libertarian iconography. The A in a circle was born in 1964.

It was in April 1964 that the proposal for a graphic symbol appeared in the internal bulletin of the *Jeunesses Libertaires*.

Why this proposal?

There were two principal reasons: to find a practical medium that reduced to a mini-

mum the time needed to sign slogans on walls & also to find a symbol sufficiently general which could be adopted by all kinds of anarchists.

Why the capital A in a circle? Presumably by derivation from the diffuse anti-militarist symbol in which the CND "fork" symbol was substituted with the initial letter of the word anarchy (in all European languages).

"The symbol proposed by us", they wrote, "fulfills these criteria. By constantly associating it with written anarchist propaganda it will even-

tually, by automatic mental association, end up evoking in people the idea of anarchism on its own."

The proposal did not then bear fruit. But in 1966 the young anarchists of the *Sacco & Vanzetti* group in Milan took the symbol up again. Until 1968 the symbol appears only to have been used in Milan. Then, with the infamous explosions of May 1968 use of the A in the circle exploded also, appearing on walls, posters & flags; it was re-exported to Paris & from there; all over the world.

The reason for such widespread use? The great simp-

licity & immediacy made the A a powerful graphic symbol & was then coupled with a "new" movement--young, expanding rapidly and in need of a unifying symbol. In the absence of any anarchist symbol at the international level & faced with inadequate national or local symbols, the A in the circle "imposed" itself, without any federation or group dreaming of "decreeing" its application.

This article was excerpted from the Italian magazine, *Rivista A*, May 1981.

The horrors of modern civilization are well implanted into society. Destruction of the eco-system is beyond its infant stage and shows no sign of reversing. Due to modern industrial society people have lost their cultural identity, living space, and the ingredients needed to maintain a creative caring lifestyle.

In North America none have been affected as much in so short a time as the indigenous people or Native American Indian. Almost completely wiped out as a people, their culture and identity lost, it would seem they would have been silenced long ago.

Fortunately a scattered few have resisted and tried to draw attention to our predicament.

In the past 15-20 years Native people have made a resurgence and have tried to point out to "white culture" the impossibility of our society maintaining harmony with the earth. "White culture" has proven itself oblivious to the notions of Native people long ago. There have been attempts by some activists to force confrontation (Alcatraz, Wounded Knee) which has ended with more people in jail, and little change resulting. Certain names come to mind...Dennis

Bank, Leonard Peltier and Russell Means, to name just a few.

Most recently, Russell Means' speech at the Survival Gathering at the Black Hills in S. Dakota was given a lot of attention. It appeared in at least three different magazines and newspapers. Copies were reprinted from the *Fifth Estate* and distributed free at *Left Books*.

Means spoke about western civilization, its effects on non-whites and revealed his dissatisfaction with Marxism and all theories devised by Europeans to bring about revolutionary change.

In my opinion Means is correct in his analysis of Marxism and Western culture. He says Marxism is the same as capitalism in that they are both theories devised by Europeans and have no intention of freeing people or promoting an ecologically balanced society. It is evident that Marxism has failed historically in its struggle to free the "working class" and in most cases has led to dehumanizing authoritarian societies (USSR, China, Cuba).

Means has made some good points in his article, but he makes some statements which help to invalidate his posi-

tion.

Means says that Native people are "correct people" who know the "way" and are the ones to "follow". He goes on to say that "revolution can only be judged by the effect it has on non-European people. This type of closed-mindedness can hardly be seen as revolutionary. Nationalism is something we need to put aside if we are going to come together to stop the total and permanent destruction of all living things on earth, something Means seems to be concerned with.

Nationalism can do nothing but separate us in our struggle for change.

Means could have pointed out things which the Native people have done historically to maintain a balanced ecosystem, or could have described Native resistance to white culture without glorification

In the article he goes on to say Europeans are plagued with rationality, which according to Means, is disdainful and cannot contribute to revolutionary change. Rationality does contribute to a non-creative, docile environment, but I don't believe all rationality should be condemned. Rationality is a human trait; it will appear under any condition

Which brings us to his view on theory. He completely dis-

misses theory and says "through theory revolution can never come about." Isn't Means advocating revolution and isn't this article his theory?

Means anti-theoretical theorizing is most disturbing. If he could have limited his refusal of theory to specific types (Marxism, christianity) or generalize without *complete* condemnation we could understand his position.

Instead he blasts all theory and winds up invalidating his own argument.

It is unfortunate that someone with his knowledge and rebellious spirit is so shortsighted.

Which brings us to the point of this article. Means and his supporters are content remaining in a segregated position. This obviously will do nothing but bring about a slow death to all those who accept his approach. We can only hope Means and his followers change their view on the points he has made concerning nationalism, rationality and theory. Blind loyalty to flag, culture or ideology can do nothing except split us in our efforts to change society.

Is there a point where we can meet without nationalism and still retain our identities and culture? I think so, and that's what it will take to bring about change, something that is without a doubt necessary.

--Jerry

SOME COMMENTS ON LEFT BANK BOOKS AS A PROJECT.

Left Bank Books is a bookstore, but is many other things as well. It is a collective of over 15 people with diverse interests & activities. We also sponsor projects like supplying books to prisoners, publishing, offering readings of prose & poetry, wholesale distribution of small libertarian publishers & so forth.

Left Bank Books has served as a resource center for those working here (donating time/money/energies) & for many people using & frequenting the place. Here we often find people with similar interests, concerns & activities &, most important, these can be the basis for other activities.

Despite the non-sectarian nature of the vast range of our political literature, *Left Bank's* primary reputation has been (deservedly) that of being a radical anti-authoritarian/anarchist bookstore. Many of us, I expect, would reject even these labels as too simplistic & limiting.

In similar vein, as opposed to the stereo-typical "political" bookstore, *Left Bank* has always emphasized enlarging & improving its sections of fiction, poetry, women's writings, & so forth.

While the attempt is worthy, it is no easy feat given the problems & economics of trying to be both a radical project & a business at the same time.

Any "political" venture of this sort is faced with this problem, but our problems are compounded in the attempt to reach beyond politics, beyond being just another "left" project. We are not only anti-capitalist, but anti-authoritarian. For many of us this means rejection of many notions which are the meat (read: sacred cows) & potatoes of most of the left. Many of us at *Left Bank* are opposed to socialism, reject all ideology (especially *leftist* ideology), hierarchy, & all its various party & non-party manifestations.

This means recognizing that it is we *ourselves* who reproduce, in our daily relations, all the conditions we oppose: capitalism is based on commodity exchange, authority is predicated on passivity. To the degree we act out these relations we subvert our own needs & desires.

The problems arising from these contradictions & the periodic upheavals within *Left*

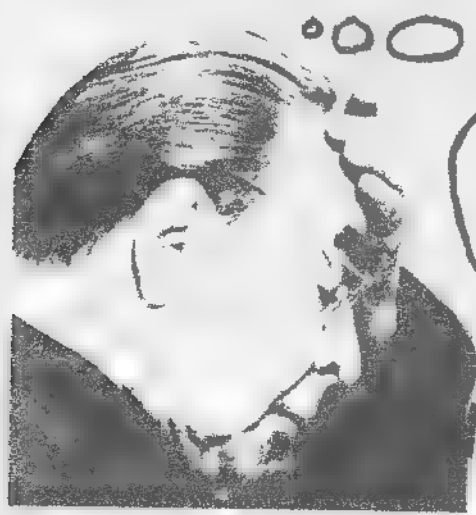
Bank from time to time are often tied to the attempts to balance out the demands of existing as a business, of living in a society dictated by capital, & trying to effect our real need & desires in the present. Such attempts are important if we recognize these things cannot be put off to some miraculous future which never arrives...indeed, cannot arrive: as the subjective is shelved, so too the objective conditions for transformation.

To recognize that there is a fascist in each of us, to understand the "relations of everyday life" is not enough. These must be fought & subverted. This is especially the case for us, where the very concept of being a so-called "radical project" too often serves as a smug cloak

for stupidity, sloganeering, ideology & defeat.

Clearly the language of the left--the language of politics --is a language of bankruptcy. We cannot speak the same language.

To the degree that we define ourselves, that we challenge all the pathetic shibboleths we seem to come armored with, it will be clear how we differ. Our project(s) should be to gain the materials necessary to capture what is human & to gain the materials required to supercede the historical & ideological defeat of leftism, to take what is best & most useful--but to have done trucking the debris. To this degree we will not be popular, but will certainly be involved in a necessary & meaningful activity. -D.B.



Those Goddam Poles!
I wish I'd never even
heard of the
working class!

—REVIEWS IN BRIEF—

The Great Naropa Poetry Wars Tom Clark

4.00

Bankruptcy exists in poetry circles no less than other political sewing circles. This is an excellent expose of the Naropa "mafia" & superstar syndrome encouraged by Ginsberg, Waldeman & others. Clark was nastily attacked for an expose too painful for the so-called "poets"...

Dr. Tin Tom Walmsley (Pulp Press, 1979)

A rollicking robust satire on the "hard-boiled" mystery genre which is truly a underground "classic". Light-hearted entertainment with more substance than most of the crap passed off as "small press" quality writing, Walmsley is clearly a writer to be read, not "watched".

Six Poets (Vagabond Press, 1979) 3.00

A nice collection from a small vital press in nearby Ellensburg. A broad approach to the concerns of all, ranging from the supercharged imagery of John Thomas (*"She called me darlin' & told me how her husband had been killed working on the railroad, & her husband's brother, & her own father in '09, & while she talked --'Never work the railroad darlin'--Maw Fortney drew the squirrels out of the sack one by one, cracked their skulls with a bonehandled knife, & sucked the brains like oysters off the half-shell, all her dead menfolk hung on the wall, in frames. The smell was blood & chamberpot & old woman..."*), to the fragile places of Ann Mennebroker (*& while she dreams in a dark pillow/someone hauls up a blue sky/for his background*), the dark senuous plumb-line of Lyn Lifshin, Gerda Penfold's sensibilities (*what can we say/when rain's/erased the stars?*), to the unerring, hard-eyed Al Masarik who takes leave of earlier street concerns for bush country & ocean (but does not take leave of his extraordinary ability to see what is always there for the seeing).

Lest we forget how important these facets of life are--how they fill & inform our lives--here we are put back in touch with the simple pulls of necessities which bind these poems with each other & us with them.



Seven Dada Manifestos Tristan Tzara (John Calder, 1981) 5.95

The lovely, exquisite writings of Tristan Tzara in his most famous manifestos provides some of the best writings Dada was to produce in their onslaught against bourgeois values.

Prisoner Without A Name, Cell Without a Number Jacobo Timerman (Knopf, 1981) 10.95H

Timerman was jailed & tortured by the Argentine government for his publishing activities. Released after years of intense worldwide pressure, Timerman describes those years, along with the irrational anti-semitism & fascism prevalent in the government. Interestingly he has been most recently attacked by Jews who deny the fascist character of Argentina--a denial highly reminiscent of the prevalent Jewish response to Hitler & company in the thirties.

Soviet Dissidents Josua Rubenstein (Beacon, 1980) 6.95

The dissident movement since the death of Stalin told through the unforgettable life stories of prominent dissidents. Their stories confirm the power of the word in a *land of silence*.

Towards An Ecological Society Murray Bookchin (Black Rose, 1980) 8.95

A collection of recent essays with emphasis on the radical analysis & perspectives of the ecological possibility. The implications of this book may well be revolutionary, but are highly suspect with Bookchin's dabblings & advocacy of purely electoral & reformist politics in a desperate effort to locate a concrete practice to complement his politics.

Louise Michel Edith Thomas (Black Rose, 1980) 443p 9.95

One of France's greatest revolutionaries, Louise Michel was writer, poet, teacher, feminist anarchist. One of the legends in the literature of freedom, Thomas has written the first complete biography with passion & critical balance.

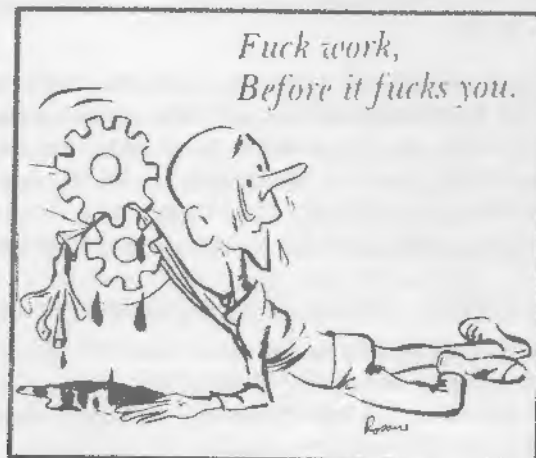


William Cole Anti-Authority Picnic is in the making, the date is October 10. We need help getting this together, if interested contact Robbie, Syl, or Sue at 527-5093.

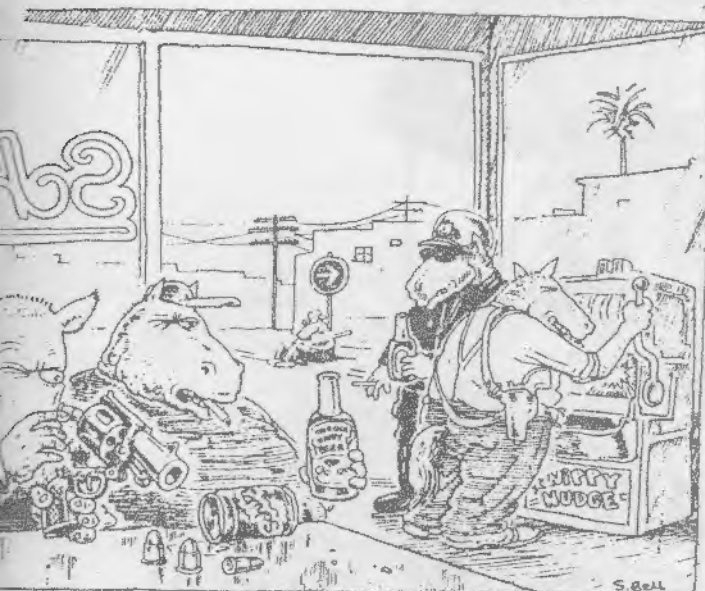
Cafe Revolt a monthly gathering of anarchist and other anti-authoritarians takes place Sunday August 29 at Morningtown Pizza, 41st and Roosevelt. Bring food and ideas to share.

Read B.C. Blackout- Anarchist weekly from Vancouver, B.C. Available free at Left Bank Books or contact B.C. Blackout, Box 65896, Station F, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Phinney St. CO-op, the only all volunteer food co-op in Seattle, is still the best bargain. Phinney St. Co-op is located high atop Phinney Ridge, call 633-2354. While your eating your organic rasins dont forget to SMASH THE STATE!



On July 29, members of the Black United Front & the People's Anti-War Mobilization (including a *Left Bank* collective member) occupied the four-plex sitting on the site of the proposed Central Area police station. This was done in order to turn the 23rd & Yesler site into emergency housing, a community center, political offices, & to counterpose this usage with that of a police station.



Much renovation of the site has already been accomplished. The site, christened *The Community Exchange*, already has phone, electricity, make-shift water supply, and tenants.

Since Mayor Royer is up for re-election & does not want to damage his already badly tarnished liberal image, no arrests seem likely in the immediate future.

Allen

REVOLTING AT CAFE REVOLT

A new presence in Seattle is *Cafe Revolt*, held the last Sunday of every month at Morningtown Pizza from 9-12pm. Basically it's a place where anarchists, anti-authoritarians and such can see films, listen to music and share food, information and ideas. In its first four months there have been a couple of light-weight films, a discussion about punk music, and informal talks by people passing through town from the Netherlands and Germany about squatting and the situation in Europe. Ideas for the future include films about prisons, technology and other pertinent issues--and certainly *Cafe Revolt* should be a place where local events can be instigated and discussed. If you have additional ideas or want to help with publicity and organizing, call Robby or Sylvie at 527-5093.

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT?

